



Vivalon History – A Trailblazer in Providing Services for Marin’s Older Adults



In 1954, a grassroots community group in Marin County decided to band together to make sure that their elders were not forgotten. This was before the time of senior centers, considerations for people with disabilities, or specialized transportation. This grassroots group started the Marin Senior Coordinating Council (aka Vivalon), a charitable senior-focused organization. Their goal was to provide programming, advice and administrative services to organizations working to better the lives of older adults.

In 1968, the first volunteer-based ride service began with one vehicle, a stepping stool, and a commitment to help one another. This early simple act of kindness blossomed through the years, and now Vivalon provides over 30,000 people each year with rides, meals, classes, care and advice that help them lead happier, healthier, more connected lives.

Today, Vivalon hosts a vibrant Healthy Aging Center with a full schedule of services and activities. In addition to transportation services, Vivalon also provides Meals on Wheels, Vivalon Nourish, other forms of nutrition, classes and workshops, health and wellness information, and other social engagement opportunities. Highly regarded in the community, Vivalon is the largest nonprofit serving older adults in Marin County.

"The original vision of the grassroots community group formed in 1954 has been realized. Marin County's older adults can rely on Vivalon to stay connected, active and engaged in life to their fullest ability. Our new Healthy Aging Campus and the expansion of our Healthy Aging Program will offer a new model of care for this vital and growing part of the Marin community." – Anne Grey, CEO

Important Dates From Vivalon History

1954 – Marin Senior Coordinating Council, Inc. forms to address the growing needs of older adults

1963 – First SUN newsletter printed (later renamed *The Express*, then *Connections*)

1968 – First ride offered to aging resident

1971 – The Council starts using the Whistlestop name

1971 – Whistlestop opens formal activities and café as a senior center

1972 – First paratransit ride offered in partnership with Marin Transit

- 1975** – Information & Referrals program begins
- 1976** – Nutrition Program begins
- 1977** – First Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- 1979** – First Whistlestop Resource Directory published (now the *Directory of Older Adult Services*)
- 1996** – Whistlestop begins contract with Golden Gate Regional Center to provide rides to individuals with developmental disabilities
- 2006** – Remodeled Jackson Café opens
- 2012** – Whistlestop Meals on Wheels partners with the County of Marin
- 2013** – Brown Bag food pantry launches in partnership with SF/Marin Food Bank
- 2013** – Healthy Aging Campus envisioned to combine affordable housing for older adults, healthy aging services and an integrated care clinic for Marin’s older adults
- 2014** – Whistlestop Nourish program launches, bringing home-delivered meals to those with chronic or life-threatening illness
- 2015** – CarePool volunteer driver program launches
- 2017** – Missed Appointment Reduction Service launches working with healthcare providers to provide transportation to reduce missed medical appointments for vulnerable populations
- 2018** – Development agreement signed with BioMarin and Eden Housing for new Healthy Aging Campus
- 2019** – Healthy Aging Program established
- 2020** – Whistlestop expands its services to address growing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 2020** – Non-Emergency Medical Rides (NEMT) for Medi-Cal patients launched
- 2020** – Whistlestop expands transportation services to San Francisco and Sonoma counties and opens a regional transportation center in Santa Rosa
- 2020** – Marin Senior Coordinating Council changes its name to Vivalon
- 2022** – Vivalon breaks ground in its Healthy Aging Camps
- 2023** – Projected date for opening of Healthy Aging Campus